

October, 1997

Handwritten notes in the top right corner, including "Letter to the Editor" and "Campaign".

### Letter to the Editor Campaign

Letters to the Editor are an easy tool to use to make a point briefly and clearly. They educate the community by discussing important issues in a public medium, create visibility for AAUW and our issues, take limited time and energy, and allow every member to feel as though she/he is doing their part to educate women voters. Creating a "Letter to the Editor Campaign" is an effective way to use the editorial page of your local newspaper to raise community awareness of national issues and their local impact. This campaign will follow the same basic premise of a telephone tree and can be a standing public policy activity.

Letters to the Editor should be written clearly and briefly. They are usually only 2-3 paragraphs and increase in effectiveness when accompanied by other letters on the same subject.

Find volunteers (members, MAL's, student affiliates, coalition partners) that are willing to write Letters to the Editor on either a weekly or monthly basis.

Use Action Alert, Get the Facts and other local letters or salient state and community issues to get subject ideas for letters. The Program and Policy Department can also provide you with sample letters for any given topic.

Once letter-writers are organized, plan a writing schedule. This effort should follow the same basic premise of a telephone tree: the first person's letter starts the campaign and is followed by the second person's letter which is followed by the third person's letter until the system is finished and starts over. This should have volunteers writing no more than one letter a month.

Create a local media list, complete with contact name, address, phone, fax, word limit for letters and deadlines. Local papers, statewide papers, free dailies or weeklies, specialty papers and organization newsletters are all good targets for letters.

Provide letter-writers with the media list. A good system has the first person submit her letter to every publication that will accept it, then have the second and third people do the same until the system is finished and starts over. This ensures thorough coverage of the local media.

Make sure letters are signed by members of AAUW branches. This will ensure AAUW gets credit for their actions and promotes visibility for the branch and organization.

When your letters are published, pat yourself on the back! Send copies to the Program and Policy Department, keep copies for yourself and *keep up the good work*.

If you have any questions, please contact the Program and Policy Department at 202/728-3310 or [votered@mail.aauw.org](mailto:votered@mail.aauw.org).